critical digest

505 FIFTH AVENUE. N. Y. 17. N. Y.
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This Week

Two for Fun-Greenwich Mews 5/25. Chekhov's one act "The Anniversary" and "A Switch in Time" by Lela Pergament with Bill Edmonson, Ruth Volner.

Seventh Heaven-ANTA 5/26. Gather-Bacher production of musical adaption of Austin Strong play with Gloria de Haven, Ricardo Montalban, Kurt Kasznar, Robert Clary.

Guys & Dolls- City Center 5/31-6/12. Return engagement with Judy Johnson, John Randolph and Ray Shaw.

Future Dates

Almost Crazy-Holiday 6/2...King & Duke-Circle 6/5...The Trial-Provincetown 6/14...Arabian Nights -Jones Beach 6/25...First Edition-Bijou 7/7.

Fall Dates

D'Oyly Carte- Shubert 9/27...A View of Bridge- 9/29...Diary of a Young Girl 10/5...The Lark-10/12 ...No Time for Comedy-10/20...Comedia Francaise-Broadway 10/25...Pipe Dream -Shubert 11/30

Summer Tryout Dates

Whisper to Me-Dallas 6/13...The Fairlee For-Tune-Bucks County 6/13 ...The Snuggrats-Westport 7/18...The Reluctant Flute-Hyde Park 7/19... The Geep-Oguinquit 8/8 A Mighty Man is He-Falmouth 8/15.

Digests of Current Week Theatre Reviews

Finian's Rainbow- City Center 5/18/. Final NYC Light Opera Company revival of Spring Season cheered as a fine product by all NY daily critics except Funke, Times, who thought much of magic of original appears to have vanished. Kerr, Herald Tribune, had a slight complaint that now and then show talks a bit too much, but it is still bursting with imaginative vitality, ablaze with a radiant score. Charming offering of a beguiling and tuneful musical, adds Chapman, News. Overall production was rated as a good one by Watts, Post, though not up to high standards of previous offerings of group this season. Helen Gallagher, Anita Alvarez, Donn Driver and Will Mahoney shared credits for top jobs from most. The music and many of the production numbers seem to have grown in statue since the 1947 showing, notes McClain, Journal American.

London Report Continued

Seperate Tables by Terence Rattigan with Margaret Leighton and Eric Portman has remained the scarcest theatre ticket in London since September reports Atkinson, Times. It is a searching and often moving study of character which presents the same characters and same setting in two different short plays. NY aisle sitter rates production the playwright's finest work...Henry IV, both parts, presented by Old Vic are achievements that will be remembered long after they disappear from the Old Vic repertory, applauds Times critic...London production of Wonderful Town needs an American cast to perk it up, Atkinson suggests. English version could have been tabbed "Wrong Note Rag." Likewise London The King and I is on the lacklustre side.

Drama Desk Awards

First Annual Vernon Rice Memorial Awards to a limited number of Off Broadway groups and individuals were presented by Drama Desk, NY Theatre Editors and Reporters Organization. Shakespearewrights, Proscenium Productions and 4th St Players were the groups honored. Jack Landau, director, and Nancy Wickwire, actress, were also cited. All were presented with scrolls. Current officers of "Drama Desk" were re-elected for the 1955-56 season. John Keating, president, John Beaufort, Vice president, Louis Calta, Treasurer, Ted Kraus, secretary.

Summer Issues C.D.

Summer Issues of "C.D." will cover tryouts of new plays in Eastern summer theatres as reported in trade journals, local daily papers and via personal inspection. Plus other special features.

NY theatre will become more diverse with a planned revival of burlesque. Justice Aron Steuer of Supreme Court has ordered NYC License Commissioner Edward T. McCaffrey to issue a license for the presentation of burlesque and vaudeville shows to T.J. Phillips, who had twice been turned down. Producer plans to stage burlesque shows at Orpheum Theatre, Brooklyn "without strip teasers, runways or exotic dancers. Phillips defined burlesque as "a satire on events, a happy medium of the ridiculous and the sublime."

Plays

House of Flowers closed...Rodgers & Hammerstein will accept theatre parties-benefits for Pipe Dream due Nov 30 at Shubert...Broadway Theatre will house Comedie Francaise on its first visit to US in fall starting Oct 25 and ending Nov 20. Le Bourgeoise Gentilhome will open the series...John van Druten's Dancing in the Chequered Shadewill be presented by Walter Staroke in October ...Doris Ramsey will produce Jerome Weidman's Skylight... Mary Frank will present Alan Paton's Too Late the Phalarope.

Players

Actors Equity and Chorus Equity have voted to merge...Ann Hegira will sub for Jennie Goldstein, Once Upon a Tailor... Cliff Robertson will replace Ben Gazzara Cat On A Hot Tin Roof next month...Robert Downing, stage manager of Cat on A Hot Tin Roof, has resigned to devote full time to diverse writing projects ...Nan McFarland replaces Elaine Stritch, Bus Stop...Jean Bayliss will replace Julie Andrews, The Boy Friend, in Sept. when latter joins musical version of Pygmalion...John Emery will replace Joe Anthony, Anastasia July 4

Other Broadways

Reclining Figure will be presented in London in July ...Orsen Welles will present his version of Moby Dick in London in July..Medea cast which plays in Paris in June has started rehearsals in NY...Shubert Theatre will re-open in Cincinnati after 20 years as a film house.

Theatre Vaudeville Notes

"Colorama" is new revue at Radio City Music Hall with Grace Thomas, Peter Hamilton, Bryan Williams and Ghezzi Brothers...Mambo Dance Contest series continues at Palace Theatre.

Summer Playhouses

Actors Fund paid tribute to 60 summer theatre producers at luncheon at Sheraton-Astor Hotel...Shelley Winters will tour for 4 weeks in Wedding Breakfast starting July 4 at Binghamton, NY...Claudette Colbert will start tryout tour of Kober-Oppenheimer's A Mighty Man is Her Aug 15 at Coonamessett ...Joan Blondell will tour for four weeks in Meade Roberts A Palm Tree ina Rose Garden... Greer Johnson's Whisper to Me to be tested in Dallas June 15...Brattle Theatre, Cambridge, will present a series of Shakespeare revivals this summer starting July 5.

Theatre Book Notes

"Preface to Drama" by Charles W Cooper publish by Ronald Press..."Inherit the Wind" published by Random House...1955 Players Guide edited by Paul Ross published.

Theatre Film Notes

"The Bad Seed" will be directed and produced for Warner Brothers by Mervyn LeRoy ...Universal considering "Teach Me How to Cry"...United Artists will release the Laurence Olivier production of "Richard III."

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

"First Nights on Broadway" will be presented at 12 05 AM on WABD(NY). Marc Connelly, Fannie Hurst and Mike Wallace will review new shows following their debuts...WRCA(NY) will present "Under Milk Wood" recording of Dylan Thomas dramatic poem June 11 at 11 15 PM ...3 for Tonight will be presented on CBS TV June 22 at 10 PM- 4 days after NY closing of show...NBC planning to present The Skin of Our Teeth after ANTA company returns from Paris July 3.

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GREEN

ROOM

DEPARTMENT

ROUGH REVIEWERS...NY drama critics do not think they were too hard on Ankles Aweigh, Variety's year end survey of aisle-sitters reveals. But UP Gaver noted that one reviewer refused to given even the Kean sisters a slight nod...It is impossible for the drama critics to agree among themselves on anything, thus McClain, Journal American, believes it is sheer twaddle to blame them for conspiring against Ankles Aweigh.

COLUMN TIPS... Peter Snitzer, a super in Inherit the Wind, is a former bombardier on a B 24 Liberator, winner of Air Medal and D.F.C. but cannot get listed in Playbill due to Equity ruling, complains Winchell...A Hawaiian Room hula dancer from Lexington Hotel has joined Abbey Players, notes Walker.

DRAMA MAIL BOX...More playwrights who can find a sun behind the clouds and show it to the theatre-going public, urges a Times reader...Plymouth Theatre treasurer Constance Coble aid to theatre parties and party agents applauded by Lenore Tobin in Variety note...Ticket prices Off Broadway are often less than week-end movie prices points out a "C.D." reader.

FOOD DEPARTMENT... The Honeys cast consumes on-stage orange juice, eggs, toast, coffee, sugar, beer, whisky, champagne, sherry, a leg of lamb, oysters, tabasco, horse radish, lemon bismuth, pepsin and a banana adds up McClain, Journal American.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...The intelligent effort being made toward rescuing the musical revue was rated by Kerr, Herald Tribune, as one of the pleasantest things about the current season. Until this year there were signs that the revue was about to join "Uncle Vanya" as a form of commercial suicide...It may be a sign of the times that so many of the most impressive modern plays are far from pleasant ones, surmises Watts, Post...Members of the cast and admirers of the show 3 for Tonight feel that producer Paul Gregory could find another singer to replace Harry Belafonte, Isms, News, agrees with critic Chapman.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...One can't act with anything but the mind, Paul Muni, Inherit the Wind, told Schumach, Times. To transform thought into act requires enormous, unwavering concentration and sturdy physique. Only then, Muni said, can an actor step out on a stage and sort of erase, as far as possible, everything he himself is and make the character he portrays a real personality.

"Pros & Cons by T.M.K."

NYC Light Opera Company program of 3 musicals deserves the appreciation and attendance of every person who considers himself a theatre fan. Well cast, sprightly directed and performed the project introduced some of the best products of the modern musical theatre to potential musical show goers who do not have $8.05 to pay for a ticket. The fact that so many want to see the shows at the $3.60 top may have a long range effect on producers thinking.

Air-cooled and/or air conditioned--theatre goers must remember that the signs do not mean a thing. At the most they really mean that the system used to modify the heat of the in-town summer playhouse will be used for part of each act. For diverse reasons, but mostly because actors want to be heard above the ancient fans, the system is turned off in most houses a few minutes after the curtain rises. Some day some producer may solve this warm weather problem, but don't give up play going until that magic morn.

OFF BROADWAY

The Furies, a new play by Argentinian playwright Enrique Suarez de Deza, will be presented May 18-28 at Senior Dramatic Workshop-1681 Broadway directed by Maria Ley-Piscator, English version by Saul Colin.

As You Like It presented Friday and Saturday evenings by Shakespearean Theatre Workshop, 729 E 6th St. Admission free..."All-in-One" presented tryouts of Aria da Capo by Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sound of Triumph by William Inge, and The Bait by James Merrill as part of Broadway Chapel Players Artist Series. Drama Trio of University of Redlands, Calif, also presented Roger Williams and Mary by Albert & Bertha Johnson as part of series also.

Shoestring Revue closed after 2 reprieves...Three Sisters closed... Billy Budd which had posted closing notice continues thanks to cash raised by cast...Bamboo Cross closed.

George Fass' Night Cafe was read at Lambs Club by John Alexander, Monte Banks, Mason Curry, John Hamilton... Medea will be presented June 17-18 at Brooklyn YMCA-30 Third Ave.

The Maids presented by Tempo Theatre is a sound production, okays Watts, Post. Group is courageous and enterprising in presenting the Jean Genet playlet, and Joyce Henry presents a performance of striking power.

Much Ado About Nothing presented by Shakespearean Theatre Workshop is worthy of mention because it was formed solely to give regular Broadway professional performers a chance to play Shakespeare and because this being the sole function it charges no admission.

THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"Laurette" by Margeurite Courtney is a beautiful, yet pitiless, biography of the author's mother, okays NBC Leon Pearson.

"First Interval", Donald Wolfit's autobiography(Odhams Press-London) is a readable book, though at times the narrative becomes a little tedious, sums up Myro, Variety.

"Grassroots Theatre" by Robert Gard (University of Wisconsin) is one of the most important books for farseeing show biz pros to come from a university press in some time, raves Down, Variety. Book is written by a man with the eye of a painter and the ear of a poet. Author has sought to protect and nourish new drama in the sticks.

THEATRE TV COMMENTS

Saint of Bleecker Street NBC TV Opera Theatre production was cheered by TV reviewers of World Telegram-Sun, News and Post. Judged by any standard the production was a significant milestone in TV progress, WT&S said. Some of the scenes which had a remote quality in the theatre gained both in intimacy and vividness on the TV screen, added Gross, News.

Shoestring Revue one hour WABD TV version resulted in an excellent TV musical hour, nods Bron, Bariety. Direction and lensing were first-rate.